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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/728,022	11/30/2000	Thomas W. Williams	SNSY - A2000-001	6107

7590 08/08/2007
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SANJOSE, CA 95110-1017

EXAMINER

TABONE JR, JOHN J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2117

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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08/08/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/728,022

Applicant(s)

WILLIAMS ET AL.

Examiner

John J. Tabone, Jr.

Art Unit

2117

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 April 2007.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 7-13 and 17-20 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 7-13 and 17-20 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 April 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 7-13 and 17-20 remain pending in the current application.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments, see Appeal Brief filed 04/11/07, with respect to claim 7 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's arguments concerning claim 17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. Claims 7-13 and 17-20 are further rejected under 35 USC § 101 and 35 USC § 112, second paragraph.

As per the arguments per claim 7:

The Appellants argues on pages 12-13, "Appellants respectfully submit that Jarwala fails to disclose or suggest the recited IC tester and IC DUT" and further states, "[t]he Examiner admits that Jarwala fails to explicitly disclose the first memory that stores a mask vector, but then states that the test vector manipulation register of register bank 29 performs the same function. Appellants traverse this characterization ... Jarwala is silent on what controls multiplexer 36. Therefore, Appellants do not concede that Jarwala teaches the recited mask vector".

Firstly, the Examiner would like out point out that the claimed "mask vector" is not used to mask vector, but is a vector which is used to control the claimed selector circuit in which vector source is used to test the DUT (i.e. deterministic from second memory or random from the random number generator). Therefore, the Examiner disagrees and

asserts that Jarwala clearly teaches the claimed first memory. Jarwala explicitly states that the Test Vector Manipulation Register (**first memory**) of the internal register bank 29 provides the primary test resource control for determining the source of test vectors supplied to the circuit board according to Table 1 in col. 4, ll. 36-38. In reading this, one skilled in the art would reason that the source of test vectors is the TVO memory 32 (deterministic) or the ATPG 34 (random) and that the Test Vector Manipulation Register controls multiplexer 36 to determine whether the deterministic vectors from TVO memory 32 or the random vectors from the LFSR in ATPG 34 is supplied to the circuit board. Further, regardless of what is disclosed in col. 5, ll. 21-26, Jarwala clearly teaches and explicitly states in Table 1, col. 4, ll. 33-34, that it is the **Configuration Register** that stores a pair of bits that specify which of four separate test patterns is to be generated and, therefore, controls ATPG 34. Therefore, the Examiner asserts that Jarwala clearly teaches the claimed first memory.

In regards to Appellants' arguments on pages 13-15 concerning the Examiner's obvious to relocated parts rejection the Examiner is not persuaded. The courts are clear in this regard. The Examiner's position is further bolstered by newly cited teaching reference **Kraus et al.** (US-6587979), who clearly illustrates in the enclosed Figures, the ability for one skilled in the art to relocate self-test circuitry between the integrated circuit, load board, IC tester and BOST circuitry.

Continuing to argue the Examiner's obvious to relocated parts rejection the Appellants' go on to state, "[a]s explicitly taught by Appellants, the recited separation of components between the IC tester and the IC DUT provides significant advantages.

Specifically, the recited system acts to reduce the throughput of the data flowing from the tester to the DUT and increases performance, i.e. allows for the possibility of obtaining and applying the data portion that is generated on the DUT at a faster rate than that could be achieved from a low cost tester". [underlining added by Examiner]. In response to Appellants' argument that the references fail to show certain features of Appellants' invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., *tester throughput and the performance provided by Appellants' recited testing system*) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

It is the Examiner's conclusion that independent claim 7 is not patentably distinct or non-obvious over the prior arts of record namely, Jarwala et al. (US-5444716). Therefore, the rejection is maintained. Based on their dependency on independent claim 7, claims 8-13, stand rejected.

Claim Objections

3. In the interest of maintaining conformity with the instantiation of an antecedent in each of the independent claims, the examiner objects to dependent Claims 8-13 and 18-20 because the claims do not refer back to the independent claim, but rather give the impression that there is a new method/module/system being claimed. In other words, the examiner requests that the applicant change the first word of each of the above dependent claims from "An" or "A" to "The".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. **Claims 7-13** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the elements. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted elements are: a compare or verification circuit that analyzes the output of the DUT with respect to an expected value.

5. **Claim 17-20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential steps, such omission amounting to a gap between the steps. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted steps are: a comparing or verification step that analyzes the output of the DUT with respect to an expected value.

6. **Claims 17-20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 17:

The step of **“g) supplying said output generated by said circuit block to an input of a stage of said random number generator”** renders this claim indefinite in conjunction with step **“b) retrieving deterministic test vector data from a second**

memory". Step g) is also insignificant because since the deterministic test vector data from a second memory is being accessed in step b), the random number generator (LFSR) has no effect on the circuit block making the step of supplying said output generated by said circuit block to an input of a stage of said LFSR inconsequential.

It appears to the Examiner that additional step must be added to the claim in order to set up conditions in which step g) is significant and affects the circuit block. Clarification and correction is required.

Claims 18-20:

These claims are also rejected because they depend on claim 17 and have the same problems of indefiniteness.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

7. **Claims 7-13 and 17-20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. These claims recite "an integrated circuit **testing** system" and "a method for **testing** an integrated circuit", however, there is no testing accomplished by the claims. In other words, the claims do not produce a tangible result. In testing any device the system or method is not useful unless the results of the test are analyzed in some way, i.e. comparing the output of the tested IC with an expected result. It is held that [t]he claimed invention as a whole must be useful and accomplish a practical application. That is, it must produce a "useful, concrete and

tangible result." *State Street*, 149 F.3d at *1373-74, 47 USPQ2d at 1601-02. See MPEP § 2106 II.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 7-10 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Jarwala et al.** (US-5444716), hereinafter Jarwala.

Claims 7-9:

Jarwala teaches a register bank 29 that is coupled via a bidirectional bus 30 to a first memory bank (32) (**second memory**) and to an automatic test pattern generator 34 (**a random number generator**). **Jarwala** teaches the first memory bank 32 is designated as a Test Vector Output (TVO) memory (**second memory**) because it stores a set of deterministic test vectors for testing the circuit board 12.sub.1 of FIG. 1. **Jarwala** also teaches the vectors in the TVO memory 32 are generated in advance of testing. **Jarwala** further teaches the Automatic Test Pattern Generator (ATPG) 34 typically takes the form of a Linear Feedback Shift Register (LFSR per claim 9) (**a random number generator**) that generates a separate one of four different patterns of test vectors in accordance with information stored in the Configuration Register (correction made by Examiner) (**based on a seed**) within the BSM internal register bank

29. **Jarwala** even further teaches the TVO memory 32 (**second memory**) and the APTG 34 (**a random number generator**) are coupled to a first and a second input, respectively, of a multiplexer 36 (**selector circuit**) that passes the signal at a selected one of its first and second inputs to its output, designated as the Test Data Output (TDO) of the BSM 20.sub.1 (**coupling to said integrated circuit**) which is coupled to a test data input of the chain of Boundary-Scan cells 14.sub.1 -14.sub.p of FIG. 1. (Table 1, Col. 4, ll. 33-34, Col. 5, ll. 14-33, Fig. 2).

Jarwala does not explicitly disclose “**a first memory for storing therein a mask vector for characterizing corresponding test vector data, said mask vector comprising a plurality of bit positions wherein a first bit value indicates that said corresponding test vector data is deterministic and wherein a second bit value indicates that said corresponding test vector data is pseudo random**”. However, **Jarwala** does disclose a Test Vector Manipulation Register (**first memory**) that provides the primary test resource control for determining the source of test vectors supplied to the circuit board. **Jarwala** also discloses this register also determines the destination for responses generated during testing. (Col. 4, ll. 34-39).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that **Jarwala's** Test Vector Manipulation Register suggests a first memory for storing a mask vector for characterizing corresponding test vector data. The artisan would have been motivated to conclude this because the Test Vector Manipulation Register comprises of memory elements for storing test resource control (**mask vector**) for determining the source of test vectors supplied to the circuit board

(for switching between TVO memory 32 (**deterministic test vector data**) and the APTG 34 (**pseudo random test vector data**)).

Jarwala does not explicitly teach the random number generator and selector circuit are located in the DUT. However, **Jarwala** does teach automatic test pattern generator 34 (**a random number generator**) and multiplexer 36 (**selector circuit**) are located within the BSM.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to relocate the automatic test pattern generator 34 and multiplexer 36 into the DUT (one of the electronic components 14₁-14_p, since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Japikse*, 86 USPQ 70 (CPA 1950). Applicants' Figures 2 and 3 also illustrate this obviousness of rearranging parts, where LFSR 230 and selector 225 are moved into DUT 16 to form new DUT 16¹ in Fig. 3. Further, **Kraus et al.** (US-6587979), a newly cited reference for teaching purposes only, clearly illustrates in the enclosed Figures, the ability for one skilled in the art to relocate self-test circuitry between the integrated circuit, load board, IC tester and BOST circuitry.

Claim 10:

“an output of said circuit block is coupled to an input of one stage of said LFSR.”

Jarwala teaches the responses generated by the circuit board 12.sub.1 of FIG. 1 (circuit block) are also compacted by a Linear Feedback Shift Register 40. (Col. 5, ll. 39-45).

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Claim 13:

Jarwala teaches the vectors in the TVO memory 32 are generated in advance of testing. (Col. 5, lines 19, 20). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that the vectors generated in advance (deterministic test vector data) that are stored in the TVO memory 32 (second memory) would be generated by an automatic test pattern generator (ATPG) process. The artisan would have been motivated to do so because automatic test pattern generator (ATPG) processes are used for generating deterministic test vector data.

9. Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Jarwala et al.** (US-5444716), hereinafter Jarwala in view of **Lesmeister** (US-6101622), hereinafter Lesmeister.

Claims 11 and 12:

Jarwala does not explicitly disclose "said mask vector is data compressed" and "a decompressor coupled between said first memory and said selector circuit".

However, **Jarwala** does disclose a Test Vector Manipulation Register (first memory) that provides the primary test resource control for determining the source of test vectors supplied to the circuit board. **Lesmeister** teaches each DATA value stored in FIFO buffer 28 (first memory) is a compressed version of a set of one or more vectors.

Lesmeister also teaches decompressor circuit 30 decompresses each read out DATA word to produce a sequence of one or more vectors which includes an input "mode selection" field (MODE_SEL). (Col. 4, ll. 57, 58, 62, 63, col. 5, ll. 42-44).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify **Jarwala's** Test Vector Manipulation Register (first memory) to include **Lesmeister's** FIFO buffer 28 (first memory). The artisan would have been motivated to do so because it would enable **Jarwala** to store compressed data as a mask vector and to save storage capacity. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify **Jarwala's** internal register bank 29 to incorporate **Lesmeister's** decompressor circuit 30. The artisan would have been motivated to do so because it would enable **Jarwala** to decompress **Lesmeister's** "mode selection" field (MODE_SEL) from the first memory and provide the decompressed mode select to the selector circuit.

10. Claims 17, 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Jarwala et al.** (US-5444716), hereinafter Jarwala, in view of **Rajski et al.** (US-5991909), hereinafter Rajski.

Claims 17:

Jarwala teaches a register bank 29 that is coupled via a bidirectional bus 30 to a first memory bank (32) (**second memory**) and to an automatic test pattern generator 34 (**a random number generator**). **Jarwala** teaches the first memory bank 32 is designated as a Test Vector Output (TVO) memory (**second memory**) because it stores a set of deterministic test vectors for testing the circuit board 12.sub.1 of FIG. 1. **Jarwala** also teaches the vectors in the TVO memory 32 are generated in advance of testing. **Jarwala** further teaches the Automatic Test Pattern Generator (ATPG) 34

typically takes the form of a Linear Feedback Shift Register (LFSR per claim 9) (**a random number generator**) that generates a separate one of four different patterns of test vectors in accordance with information stored in the **Configuration Register** (correction made by Examiner) (**based on a seed**) within the BSM internal register bank 29. **Jarwala** even further teaches the TVO memory 32 (**second memory**) and the APTG 34 (**a random number generator**) are coupled to a first and a second input, respectively, of a multiplexer 36 (**selector circuit**) that passes the signal at a selected one of its first and second inputs to its output, designated as the Test Data Output (TDO) of the BSM 20.sub.1 (**coupling to said integrated circuit**) which is coupled to a test data input of the chain of Boundary-Scan cells 14.sub.1 -14.sub.p of FIG. 1. (Table 1, Col. 4, ll. 33-34, col. 5, ll. 14-33, Fig. 2).

“e) applying said output test vector to said circuit block;”

Jarwala teaches the TDO output of the BSM 20.sub.1 is coupled to a test data input of the chain of Boundary-Scan cells 14.sub.1 -14.sub.p of FIG. 1. (Col. 5, ll. 31-33).

“f) obtaining an output generated by said circuit block in response to said output test vector;”

Jarwala teaches the TVI memory bank 38 stores responses generated by the chain of Boundary-Scan cells 14.sub.1 -14.sub.p of FIG. 1, in response to test vectors supplied thereto, via the multiplexer 36. (Col. 5, ll. 36-38).

Jarwala does not explicitly disclose **“retrieving a mask vector from a first memory, said mask vector for characterizing corresponding test vector data, said**

mask vector comprising a plurality of bit positions wherein a first bit value indicates that said corresponding test vector data is deterministic and wherein a second bit value indicates that said corresponding test vector data is pseudo random". However, **Jarwala** does disclose a Test Vector Manipulation Register (**first memory**) that provides the primary test resource control for determining the source of test vectors supplied to the circuit board. **Jarwala** also discloses this register also determines the destination for responses generated during testing. (Col. 4, ll. 34-39).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that **Jarwala's** Test Vector Manipulation Register suggests a first memory for storing a mask vector for characterizing corresponding test vector data. The artisan would have been motivated to conclude this because the Test Vector Manipulation Register comprises of memory elements for storing test resource control (mask vector) for determining the source of test vectors supplied to the circuit board (for switching between TVO memory 32 (**deterministic test vector data**) and the APTG 34 (**pseudo random test vector data**)).

Jarwala does not explicitly teach "**g) supplying said output generated by said circuit block to an input of a stage of said random number generator**". However, the idea of supplying a circuit's output back to stages of a random number generator (PRPG/LFSR) is well known. **Rajski** teaches in an analogous art LFSR 12 and flip-flop chains 15 are coupled to each other in a manner that allows LFSR 12 to concurrently output and provide in parallel data bits to flip-flop chains 15, and at the same time flip-flop chains 15 concurrently output and provide in parallel feedback data bits to multiple

sites (XOR 18) of LFSR 12 (supplying said output generated by said circuit block to an input of a stage of said random number generator). (Fig. 1, col. 5, ll. 39-47).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify **Jarwala's** ATPG 34 to include **Rajski's** LFSR 12 and feedback path structure. The artisan would be motivated to do so because it would enable the LFSR in **Jarwala's** ATPG 34 to generate in parallel multiple portions of a deterministic partially specified data vector as defined by **Rajski's** disclosure, in particularly claim 22.

Claim 19:

Jarwala teaches the vectors in the TVO memory 32 are generated in advance of testing. (Col. 5, lines 19, 20). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that the vectors generated in advance (deterministic test vector data) that are stored in the TVO memory 32 (second memory) would be generated by an automatic test pattern generator (ATPG) process. The artisan would have been motivated to do so because automatic test pattern generator (ATPG) processes are used for generating deterministic test vector data.

Claim 20:

Jarwala teaches the Boundary-Scan cells 14₁ -14_p each comprise a single-bit register associated with a node of an electronic component 15, such as an integrated circuit or the like. (Col. 3, ll. 8-11).

11. Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Jarwala et al.** (US-5444716), hereinafter Jarwala, in view of **Rajski et al.** (US-5991909), hereinafter Rajski, in further view of **Lesmeister** (US-6101622), hereinafter Lesmeister.

Claim 18:

Jarwala does not explicitly disclose "said mask vector is data compressed" and "a decompressor coupled between said first memory and said selector circuit".

However, **Jarwala** does disclose a Test Vector Manipulation Register (first memory) that provides the primary test resource control for determining the source of test vectors supplied to the circuit board. **Lesmeister** teaches each DATA value stored in FIFO buffer 28 (first memory) is a compressed version of a set of one or more vectors.

Lesmeister also teaches decompressor circuit 30 decompresses each read out DATA word to produce a sequence of one or more vectors which includes an input "mode selection" field (MODE_SEL). (Col. 4, ll. 57, 58, 62, 63, col. 5, ll. 42-44).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify **Jarwala's** Test Vector Manipulation Register (first memory) to include **Lesmeister's** FIFO buffer 28 (first memory). The artisan would have been motivated to do so because it would enable **Jarwala** to store compressed data as a mask vector and to save storage capacity. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify **Jarwala's** internal register bank 29 to incorporate **Lesmeister's** decompressor circuit 30. The artisan would have been motivated to do so because it would enable **Jarwala** to

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decompress **Lesmeister's** "mode selection" field (MODE_SEL) from the first memory and provide the decompressed mode select to the selector circuit.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John J. Tabone, Jr. whose telephone number is (571) 272-3827. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, JACQUES H. LOUIS JACQUES can be reached on (571) 272-6962. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

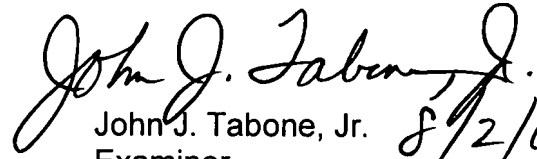
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/Cynthia Britt/
Primary Examiner
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John J. Tabone, Jr.
Examiner
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